

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 SAB-01 SAM-01 /077 W

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R 190907Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4409

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 11274

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJ: SYRIA AND LEBANON

REF: TEHRAN 10868

1. LEBANESE AMBASSADOR AL-KHALIL TOLD DCM EVENING
NOVEMBER 18 THAT HE HAD HAD A LONG AND SOMEWHAT ACRIMONIOUS
PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM
DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAN. AMONG POINTS THAT KHADDAM
MADE WERE THAT KHALIL'S FRIEND SHAMUN NEEDED TO BE TAKEN BY
THE EAR AND TAUGHT "A GOOD LESSON" AND THAT IF THERE WAS
FURTHER TALK OF LEBANON BEING BIFURCATED, SYRIA WOULD HAVE
TO INTERVENE. IN RESPONSE TO KHALIL'S OBSERVATION THAT
THIS WOULD OBVIOUSLY INVITE COUNTER-RESPONSE FROM OUTSIDE
FORCES SUCH AS ISRAEL, KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA WAS NOT
LIMITED TO USING REGULAR MILITARY FORCES FOR SUCH
PURPOSES. IT HAD A LARGE ARMED IRREGULAR MILITIA WHICH
HAD NOT YET BEEN COMMITTED STANDING BY. ACCORDING TO
KHALIL, KHADDAM WENT ON TO SAY THAT IF THERE WAS ANY
SERIOUS QUESTION OF LEBANON'S TERRITORIAL STATUS BEING
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CHANGED, THEN SYRIA WOULD HAVE TO RENEW ITS CLAIM THAT
LEBANON WAS ACTUALLY A PART OF SYRIA. KHALIL RESPONDED

THAT HIS MEMORY OF HISTORY WAS THAT BOTH SYRIA AND LEBANON WERE A PART OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THAT IF SYRIA WANTED TO REFER TO THE HISTORICAL STATUS OF THE AREA, THEN TURKEY WOULD HAVE FIRST CLAIM ON BOTH COUNTRIES. KHALIL CLAIMED THAT IN THE FACE OF HIS VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF LEBANON'S POSITION AND HIS WARNINGS AGAINST OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE, KHADDAM BECAME CONCILIATORY AND URGED KHALIL TO VISIT DAMASCUS TO CONTINUE THEIR CONVERSATION. KHALIL LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE WOULD FOLLOW UP ON KHADDAM'S INVITATION. INTER ALIA, KHALIL SAID THAT KHADDAM WAS EXTREMELY IRRITATED THAT THE IRANIANS HAD RAISED THE LEBANESE ISSUE WITH HIM AND THAT HE HAD HAD TO REVISE HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY AFTER DINNER REMARKS TO TAKE NOTE THAT THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED.

2. IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR, WHO JOINED IN THE CONVERSATION, KHALIL SAID THAT THE ARAB DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE WAS AFFRONTED AT THE COARSE AND VOLGAR LANGUAGE THAT KHADDAM HAD USED IN DESCRIBING PRESIDENT SADAT AND THE SINAI AGREEMENT. WHILE NEITHER DISAGREED NECESSARILY WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF KHADDAM'S REMARKS, THEY FELT THAT THEY WERE COUCHED IN LANGUAGE THAT WAS UNCALLED FOR AND UNBECOMING OF A FOREIGN MINISTER.

3. THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR THEN ASKED IF KHALIL HAD RECEIVED A NOTE FROM THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HERE BRINGING A PRAVDA ARTICLE TO HIS ATTENTION WHICH CONDEMNED SADAT AND THE SINAI AGREEMENT IN STRONGLY DEROGATORY TERMS. KHALIL RESPONDED THAT HE HAD INDEED AND THAT HE WAS IRRITATED AND UPSET BY IT AND INTENDED TO WRITE A LETTER BACK TO THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN WHICH HE WOULD ASK HIS ARAB DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES TO JOIN HIM, PROTESTING THIS UNUSUAL DIPLOMATIC MOVE. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S ACTION HAD GIVEN THE PRAVDA ARTICLE AN OFFICIAL STATUS WHICH IT DID NOT OTHERWISE ENJOY AND THAT HE FOUND THIS UNACCEPTABLE. THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR WAS NON-COMMITTAL ON WHETHER HE WOULD JOIN KHALIL IN HIS INTENDED PROTEST.

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